

The Virger

Spring 2014
Issue 282



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The Official Magazine of the Church of England Guild of Vergers





Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of *The Virger*. If you would like to include Branch news, articles, adverts, photos, book reviews or any other information you feel our readers would find of interest please send to the Communications Officer by the Deadline Date below.

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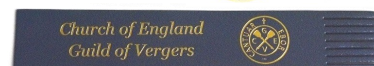
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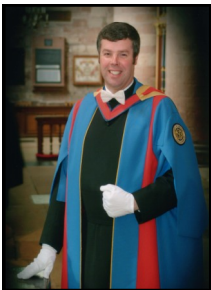
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NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



When I first moved to Carlisle I did not own a television and could not afford the TV license, so, when I was sick of sitting on my own in the flat, I used to walk down to the Railway Station and sit and watch people arrive and depart on their trains. The mix of emotions was obvious, the sadness as someone took leave of a loved one and the joy of friends arriving. The one thing that remained was the constant sound of the clock as it flipped over the seconds, minutes and hours. It became almost as a heartbeat to me, it's meaning depending on how I felt, the steady rhythm reassuring that life was continuing when I had had a bad day and was feeling lonely. On the other hand that it was a constant reminder that life was passing by all too quickly when I was feeling upbeat and content.

As we move through the constant changes of the Liturgical Year, we know that the joy of Easter will soon follow the reserved and penitential period of Lent, and that, from a practical point of view, our job as Vergers will get busier as we experience Holy Week with its great sorrow and then we are catapulted into Easter Day having had to rush around like loonies preparing our buildings for the party of all parties. It is no wonder we feel washed out and a bit weepy toward the end of Easter Day. In the few moments of quiet before we fall asleep, hopefully in a state of happy exhaustion knowing that all the hard work done over the last few days has paid off, there will be that familiar sound of the clock gently and constantly passing time... Rain and flood, the news of late has been full of saturated ground, ruined homes, soaked people and animals. If you have or your community has been affected please be assured that you are still being held in our thoughts and prayers.

This time of the year sees a lot of our Branches have their Annual General Meetings. May I wish all newly elected Officers warmest congratulations and on those retiring from their roles thank you for all you have done. May I remind you to send in your return forms so we can keep the General Secretary and National Treasurer happy.

May I wish you all a happy and blessed Easter.

James Armstrong



NATIONAL CHAPLAIN'S LETTER



Dear Friends,

Greetings. I can scarcely believe that Lent is almost upon us – I am reminded of a small girl, found in tears on Shrove Tuesday. Asked what was the matter, she said, 'We have to face forty day of farce!' I hope that for you Lent will not be a farce but a time of meaningful deepening of faith. I am writing this on 'Creation Sunday' – the Second Sunday before Lent, reflecting on God's goodness to us in creation. I believe that the creation narratives encourage us to look at the 'why' of creation – why did God create as he did? Why did he create human beings in his own image and after his likeness? The narratives also help us to consider 'how' God created the world and everything that is in it. The God portrayed in Genesis, chapter one, is remote, majestic and powerful – able to create by a word and to see that everything he creates is very good. The narrative was written at a time when the Jews thought they had lost all – they had been deported to Babylon, lost their young men and their land so God is portrayed as creating the perfect ecosystem and human beings are the crown of his creation. They are commanded to 'fill the earth and subdue it' and the holy God created a holy people – a people who like God would be righteous, merciful and prepared to care for the whole of the created order. It was to be an ideal relationship between Creator and the world he had created. As Augustine writes about the relationship of God with his people, '*God made us for himself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in him.*' So God made us out of joy, out of the willingness to be in relationship with us, and the freedom he gives us should make us joyful, able and willing to respond to his love. Lent is for loving, so one of the tasks of the coming forty days is for us to deepen our relationship with the God who loved us enough to create us in his image.

The second aspect of the creation narrative is the 'how' of creation: how was God able to create out of chaos? The Spirit of God hovered over the chaos and with a word, 'Let there be light,' order was brought out of the chaos. It is often when we contemplate the power and joy of God in creation that we are most aware of the chaos and wasteland within our own lives. Darkness and dread seem to hover all around us and although we have a real desire to know and love God, such desire seems to be beyond our grasp. The Spirit of God hovers over our confusion and God speaks through it and breathes into it so that the darkness is ruffled and stirred, and there is an explosion of light. Augustine meditated on this transformation and wrote, '*Who can understand the mystery or explain it to others? What is Light whose gentle beams now and again strike through my heart, causing me to shudder with awe, yet firing me with their warmth? I shudder to feel how different I am from it: yet in as far as I am like it, I am aglow with fire.*'

The give and take of the divine love encourages us, perhaps demands of us, both to learn about creation and to care for every living creature for all are made and sustained by God. Michael Mayne wrote '*I believe that the creation is an endless sequence of variations on the unchanging theme of God's love ...*' All things, including human beings, praise God by being what they supremely are, themselves. During Lent many of us will sing the Benedicite 'O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him for ever.' Human beings are most properly themselves when they love, so Lent is for loving; for being ourselves – loving to the whole created order and to our fellow human beings and above all to God, our Creator.

I pray that you will all have a peaceful, creative and loving Lent!

Canon Maureen



FROM THE LIAISON OFFICER



I just wanted to give you an update on the role of the Liaison Officer. Last November I had a stand at General Synod in London, ably assisted by John Shearer and Irene Money, and my dear husband, who acted as my pack horse and carried my kit.

General Synod is an unusual affair. The Delegates and Exhibitors arrive through the same entrance but Delegates go into the Chamber by one door and Exhibitors go to their exhibition areas. Exhibition areas are not in the main drag of the Synod so are out of view of the Delegates. I am told that each Delegate gets a hand out with the names of all those who are exhibiting and where they are situated. I don't dispute this but I am sure a bit more effort could go into promoting the Exhibitors. The best interaction is in the smaller more informal refreshment area where there is a ready source of tea, coffee and cake and light lunches. Here you can meet, chat and try and cajole the Delegates to visit your exhibition.



Anyway I was heartened to be approached by two Incumbents who wanted information on creating the role of Vergers in their Churches and since then I have spoken face to face with a lovely gent and his wife from Dorking and with another prospective Verger on the phone. I think the gent from Dorking has now joined the Guild. I did my best to persuade him that it was a good organisation to be in.

John Shearer and I are delighted with the quality of the goods we have to exhibit, however we have no freebies to give away. Many of the other stalls have merchandise i.e. lanyards, pens, mugs etc. to give away, which seems to draw people to their stall. At the last Standing Committee it was decided that we should look into purchasing some merchandise perhaps using the slogan 'Keep Calm Ask The Verger'. If you, your Church, Minster or Cathedral has recently bought any new merchandise please let me know. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Denise Mead



CANTERBURY & EAST KENT BRANCH NEWS



On Tuesday 26th November 2013 some thirteen members of the Canterbury & East Kent Branch met for a Christmas Supper at The Pilgrims Hotel, Canterbury. After drinks and a jolly good natter, we sat down to a beautifully cooked meal, the pulling of crackers and general talk.

Our Branch Chairman, Julian Thorn, spoke about the shock we had all had over the loss of Rosemary Ballard so soon after the death of George, her father and our Branch Treasurer. He also spoke about some ideas for outings and asked us to think of our own ideas.

After this, Bryan Webb, our Branch Treasurer, gave out the prizes from the raffle, and as he did this we were all so glad to hear that Rosemary's cat had settled in and was very happy living with Chris and Debbie Crooks, who were sadly unable to be with us due to a funeral. Supper finished at 9:45 with thanks given to all the staff at the hotel.

Cherry Johnstone
Branch Correspondent



CHICHESTER, GUILDFORD & PORTSMOUTH BRANCH NEWS



The latter part of 2013 was a sad one for our Branch, as in November and December, we learnt of the sudden deaths of two more of our members.

Firstly, Cyril Ward, who was one of four of us admitted to the Guild in Guildford Cathedral in May 1987, though he had been the Verger at Saint Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere, since 1983. Having joined the Guild, he and his late wife, Dorothy (who died in 1996) were very dedicated members, attending practically all the Branch Meetings and Rallies, as the York and Canterbury Province annual gatherings were then called. After he was widowed and dealt the blow of deteriorating sight he was undismayed and was still to be found far and near, being chauffeured or using bus, train or plane! Life was never dull as he was full of anecdotes and a joy to be with. In the summer of 2008 he retired from verging duties, having completed 25 years of service. Latterly he trained Carol Skeates, so there was no vacancy. He continued to attend the Meetings and Festivals whenever he could with his usual good humour and sincerity. About twenty members attended his funeral on 25th November. Well done thou faithful servant.

Then in December there came another blow, with the death of Ronald Moorey being announced. A bit earlier he had undergone an operation and seemed to be progressing well. Ronald had been the Verger at Saint Christopher's Church, Haslemere, for a number of years before joining the Guild in October 2000. He, and his wife Vera, became regular attendees at our Branch Meetings, often chauffeuring Cyril, though unfortunately they had become fewer as the years passed and the Members grew older and our numbers had decreased. Ronald's funeral was held on 23rd December and with the onset of the storms and gales, leading to problems in travelling only seven members were present but a goodly number of the congregation had ignored the vicious elements to attend. May they both rest in peace and rise in glory.

Sheila J Ford
Branch Correspondent



MANY THANKS



Valerie Groves and her family would like to thank all the Vergers and friends who attended Guildford Cathedral for The Service of "Thanksgiving for the Life of Bill Groves" on October 18th last year. They would also like to thank those of you who sent cards and messages of sympathy. It was good to read and hear of how highly Bill was thought of in the Guild.

Collections and donations amounted to just over £1,100. Half was donated to Macmillan Cancer Support and the remainder was divided between South West Thames Kidney Fund and Guildford Cathedral.

Bill's ashes are buried in the Remembrance Garden of Guildford Cathedral.



IPSWICH BRANCH NEWS



I would like to start my report off with wishing a belated 'Happy New Year' from all of the members of Ipswich Branch to all fellow Vergers and Clergy. For me this is going to be a rather short report! But the compulsory photograph is attached.

Ipswich Branch started off the year, and, as a pre-launch to our 2014 meetings, with a New Year's Meal and more importantly a social get-together at one of the local eating establishments. It was a good turnout of fifteen members and so nice to welcome along a few spouses as well. The company and food were excellent, lovely conversation flowed, (as well as the drink – but not too much as we were all driving home afterwards), as we had not seen each other since our last meeting in October and we all definitely had a lot to catch up on.

The photograph attached is of us all licking our spoons after consuming rather lovely puddings, I personally can recommend and vouch for the chocolate fudge cake!



Our next meeting will be on Friday 21st March at Saint Mary and Saint Botolph, Whitton Parish Church in Ipswich, where our host will be one of our Members, Kenneth Game. I personally have never been to Whitton before and am very much looking forward to doing a bit of research ready for our next Branch report.

And finally, being Somerset born and bred I would like us all to think about the people, both living and working in Somerset, that we hold them in our thoughts and prayers, for the terrible flooding that is affecting that part of the country, as well as remembering the other parts of the UK we hear about regularly in the news and the devastating effect that the recent spell of bad weather has had on everyone involved. God Bless, until next time.

Jean Cobb

Area Leader & Branch Correspondent



LEICESTER & PETERBOROUGH BRANCH NEWS



We began the New Year with our Branch AGM held in Kirby Muxloe Church Hall, Leicester, on Monday 27th January. Some seventeen Members, including our Area Leader, Lance Bloom, were in attendance. Also our retiring Branch Chaplain, Reverend James Shakespeare, who opened the meeting with prayers.

Our Branch Chairman, Jack Lippett, thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the various Officers for their hard work during the past year, with rapturous applause for each. The apologies were given followed by the reading of the minutes of the previous AGM and matters arising, and the presentation of accounts, etc... We then proceeded to the various reports. The Area Leader's highlight was about the database, where permission should be given from Members before names, addresses, e-mails and telephone numbers can be printed in directories.

The Officers remain the same: Chairman - Jack Lippett, Secretary - Kathryn Mobbs, Dip GV Hons, Treasurer - Clive Mobbs, Branch Correspondent - Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV, Magazine Distributors - Clive and Kathryn Mobbs.

The retiring Branch Chaplain explained to us that owing to extra clergy area spiritual needs he could no longer look after us as well. We presented him with a book token, for which he was grateful. We are now in the process of searching for a new Chaplain. One or two Clergy have been approached but as yet there has been no answer. Lance Bloom did mention that a lay person or a retired member of the Clergy could be asked.

In AOB it was stated that Branch Funds were low, one or two extra raffles were suggested to deal with this but we would have to find venues for social gatherings to do these.

Our next meeting will be on Monday 24th March for a meal at The Gunnills, Glenfield, Groby Road, Leicester, and next years AGM will be on Monday 26th January 2015, venue to be confirmed. The meeting closed with the words of the Grace said by all.

Marjorie Thomas, Dip GV
Branch Correspondent



LONDON, SOUTHWARK & CHELMSFORD BRANCH NEWS



The AGM of the London, Southwark and Chelmsford Branch took place on Wednesday 26th February 2014 at Saint Marylebone Parish Church, Marylebone Road, London by kind invitation of the Rector, Reverend Stephen Evans.

The present building is the fourth one to bear the name. The first was a small church built in about 1200. In about 1400 it was rebuilt about half a mile away from its present site. Francis Bacon was married there on 11th May 1606. In 1740 a new church was built. The Reverend Charles Wesley frequented the Church and his tomb is to be found in the graveyard. Lord Nelson also attended services here, his daughter, Horatia, being baptised here on 3rd May 1803. The fourth new building, which is built in neo-classic style, was consecrated in 1817. Two very famous people were born in the Parish in 1812 and both attended the Church, Charles Dickens and Robert Browning. It was originally built without the apse, which was added in 1884. At present there is major work being carried out on the Crypt.

The AGM was preceded by a service of Holy Communion celebrated by our Branch Chaplain, The Right Reverend Bishop Edward Holland.

During the service Bishop Holland admitted five new Full Members to the Guild: Simon Brears from Saint James, Piccadilly, David Dade from Saint Anne's, Soho, & Philip Stromeyer from Saint James, Garlickhythe; and Lilibeth Solajes from Temple Church, London, as an Associate Member. Also Alistair Dean was welcomed into the Branch as a Full Member, having transferred from the Overseas Branch in Canada. He is currently based in the Chelmsford Diocese while actively looking for a post.



My son, James Taylor, who is studying for a Ph.D. in Musicology (Russian Music) at Bristol University, was privileged to be asked to play the organ for the service. He said afterwards that it was a wonderful experience. The organ is a 1987 Rieger instrument, and is the product of a unique collaboration between the Church and the Royal Academy of Music. The Academy contributed half of the cost so that students can use for practice and teaching.

After the service, the 27 members present retired to an ante room for the AGM addressed by our Chairman, Denise Mead. Our Treasurer, Irene Money, gave her report of the accounts with the news that they were in a very healthy position. There were no contentious issues to debate, so the committee was elected. Chairman: Denise Mead, Treasurer: Irene Money, Branch Correspondent/Vice Chair: Alan Taylor and Events Co-ordinator: Carole Sharpe were all re-elected unanimously. Unfortunately our Secretary, Nigel Skayman, has, due to circumstances beyond his control stood down. At present the post of Secretary is vacant. Our Area Leader, Stephen Haude, stood down at the end of his three year term and John Shearer was elected as the new Area Leader. Our AGM finished in its traditional way with a wonderful buffet and wine prepared by Denise Mead and husband Melvyn. Many thanks. Our thanks go also to Reverend Stephen Evans and the Vergers, James Park and Robert Newton, for allowing us to use Saint Marylebone Parish Church for our AGM and for their help and preparation for the service of Holy Communion.

Alan Taylor
Branch Correspondent



OXFORD BRANCH NEWS



There was an air of "Ave et Vale" (Hail and farewell) when representatives from the Oxford Branch met for Holy Communion and their AGM on the afternoon of 21st January. During the service a new Full Member was admitted: Mrs Chris Howell from Waltham Saint Lawrence. Another (prospective) new Member, Christopher Waterhouse of Oxford, was unfortunately unable to attend.

Reverend Canon Roy Taylor, the Branch Chaplain, preached on the subject of "Welcoming": obviously a topic we can all warm to. And indeed it was appropriate: we were at Roy's Church, Saint Andrew and Saint Mary Magdalene, Maidenhead, which has always extended great hospitality to us. Within the routine business of the formal meeting, there was a rather sad juncture: due to eyesight problems, Roy Taylor stepped down from the Branch Chaplaincy.

Foreknowledge does not reduce the sadness felt. On several occasions Roy has come straight from the airport to our meetings, and has consistently given encouragement, wise advice and firm friendship. Roy claimed that he has enjoyed eating meals with us as well as our fellowship, and for our part we have greatly benefited from his spiritual nourishment. The Branch expressed their appreciation by electing (and presenting him with a certificate), as "Branch Chaplain Emeritus".

The Reverend Peter Viney of Christ the Servant King, High Wycombe, having been nominated by the membership as the incoming Branch Chaplain, has agreed to take on the post and is now just awaiting the Bishop of Oxford's formal approval to an earlier verbal notification. Marie Jackson, who has led us on a number of "Quiet days" at Douai Abbey, will become our "Honorary Chaplain".

In early December, the Branch held its annual Christmas Lunch at the Wee Waif Restaurant, Charvil, near Reading. This provided a welcome break before the rigours and preparations for Christmas Festivities and thereafter.

Dennis Wildman
Oxford Branch correspondent.



SOMERSET & AVON BRANCH NEWS



Our final meeting for 2013 was an informal lunch in November at "The Greenhouse", College Green, Bristol. It was a rather grey and drizzly day with a gusty wind blowing, which was making the last of the autumn leaves fall from the trees like confetti. However, this did not detract from the warmth of friendship we all enjoyed. The Greenhouse is a rather unusual place and, in a former life, was once an upmarket shop which had a café/restaurant upstairs which overlooked the shop below. It was here that gentlemen waited whilst their wives or lady friends tried on the different items of clothing displayed in the shop. But not for us, as we all enjoyed a tasty meal from a very varied menu.

Since my last report we have had two events which have affected the Branch. The first was the loss of Winnie Elliott, who died suddenly in December. Winnie had been a longstanding Member of the Guild and was the Verger at Saint Paul's Church, Weston-super-Mare. Several Members of the Branch attended her funeral service, including our Branch Chairman, Reyn Badger, and our Branch Chaplain, Colin Maggs. Although Winnie had become very frail over recent years she was a keen supporter of all the Branch Meetings and social occasions and we shall very much miss her company.

However, as we sadly lose one Member, I am pleased to say that we have gained a new one. John Bright, who has attended Saint Gregory the Great Church in Horfield, Bristol, since a very young age has recently joined our Branch. At five years of age he was the Boat Boy accompanying the Thurifer with the incense. He moved away from the Church when he was married in 1967 but returned to Saint Gregory's in 2011 and became Sacristan. Canon James Wilson encouraged him to consider the post of Verger and John readily accepted the role. John was admitted as a Full Member of the Guild during the service of Holy Communion before our AGM by our Branch Chaplain.

Our AGM was held in the Lady Chapel at Saint Gregory's after which we retired to the adjacent Church Hall to enjoy the culinary delights of a lunch cooked by Canon James. We have a number of events provisionally planned for 2014 which I can hopefully tell you about in future editions of The Virger.

Christopher M Eynon
Branch Correspondent



YORK BRANCH NEWS



The York Branch of the Guild, along with members from the South & West Yorkshire Branch, enjoyed a convivial Christmas Lunch on 25th November 2013 at a new venue in Thirsk.

The change of location was prompted by the fiftieth anniversary of John Lazenby's service as a Verger in Saint Mary's Church, Thirsk, which we celebrated first with a service of Holy Communion. During the service we welcomed a new Member, Angela Hamilton, from Saint Patrick's Church in Patrington.

The service was followed by a brisk stroll to John's favourite restaurant, the Golden Fleece, where we enjoyed an excellent meal and parted in convivial mood. There is a strong possibility we shall return to the same venue for the 2014 Christmas Lunch.



John's 50th anniversary had been celebrated at Saint Mary's earlier in the year, as reported in a previous issue of 'The Virger' but this was several months ahead of the real date, as John professed that he didn't really like winter. We hope our visit brightened up the season for him.

And thus fortified and refreshed, we returned to Churches and prepared for Christmas.

(The first picture is of John Lazenby and Doreen Cook, with a collective 75 years as Vergers [silly spelling] between them. The second picture is a group shot of Guild Members in Saint Mary's Church, Thirsk, including, on the right, new Member Angela Hamilton of Saint Patrick's Church, Patrington and, on the left, John Lazenby with his CEGV Long Service Certificate.)

Neil Pickford
York and South & West Yorkshire Area Leader



FORTHCOMING EVENTS



2014

Wednesday 14th May ~ York Province Festival in Lancaster Priory

Sunday 10th - Thursday 14th August

Annual Training Conference at the Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern

Tuesday 23rd September ~ Canterbury Province Festival at Hereford Cathedral



STEPHEN RUTHERFORD'S MISSION TRIP TO CAMBODIA



In November and December 2013 I was privileged to be part of a missions team with Ratanak (UK) comprising of sixteen members from Ireland, (including a Christian Band called Bluetree), England, Canada and America.

The majority of us met up at Heathrow on 25th November, flying to Singapore and then onto Phnom Penh.

During week one, we visited projects that Ratanak (UK) supports – Sugar 'n' Spice Cafe and Bloom Cafe managed by 'Daughters of Cambodia' which include production facilities for making beautiful wedding cakes, crafts, silk screening and a visitor centre, providing employment for girls off the streets.

During our time at 'Bloom Cafe', the group led worship, played games and Sally, my wife, along with another team member took devotions.

We also visited 'S21' the most notorious of the Khmer Rouge torture prisons, and then onto the 'killing fields,' gaining insight into the events through Pol Pot's regime, 1975 – 1978, that has shaped modern day Cambodia.

On Friday of week one, we took an internal flight to Siem Reap joining Reaska Himm, who witnessed as a boy of 13 his own family, (parents and eight siblings), being killed and who was also left for dead in a pit, but he managed to escape. Reaska and his community now benefit from a dam that Ratanak recently built, along with student dorms and a Community Centre. Some of the group played ice hockey with the boys, whilst the girls played with the younger children and got to know some of the locals. Later in the evening Bluetree put on a concert, which was like a big family celebration for the community

Week two we were based at 'Rehab's House', in Phnom Penh, a former brothel which is now a registered school, but also includes a Church, Medical Centre and 'Kids Club'. The building is in Svay Pak, a known child trafficking district. Some of the group taught craft and music during the mornings to the young leaders (disciples) whilst I helped Sally with drama classes each morning. In the afternoons the group along with the Band ran 'Kids Club' where up to 200 children came each day to enjoy having fun and being kids as they danced, sang, played games, did activities and drama and listened to stories along with 'action' memory verses. I was really blessed to see children being children, even if it was for just a short time in their lives, as they enjoyed respite from the suffering they go through at the hands of deprived individuals as in this area it is known that up to 70% of children are trafficked for sex and this should not be so.

In the afternoons we also visited the 'brick factories', where families who have found themselves in debt are now in bonded labour including children who as soon as they are able also work alongside their parents. I have not seen such extreme poverty, barefooted children with one set of clothes walking over sharp broken bricks, surviving on a bag of rice which feeds a family for a week!

There were special moments as Bluetree held concerts amongst the families and the children clapped and danced and raised their hands as the adults listened intently whilst the Gospel was given. We also held a concert for the Vietnamese Community who live by the river, also in extreme poverty, and who accepted bags of rice as their staple diet from the charity.

During the second week we also went to a Shelter called 'New Song', where girls that have been rescued from the brothels and trafficking undergo cognitive therapy and counselling and are treated like 'princesses', special and priceless.

The last Friday we celebrated Christmas with a concert and meal at the Sugar 'n' Spice Cafe where approximately 20 girls work hard making a dignified living instead of being exploited on the streets. It was good to see brothels being closed down and buildings once meant for harm now being used for good by Ratanak.

During the fortnight Bluetree sang their song 'God of this City', and we know the Lord has 'greater things to do' for Cambodia. There is a great darkness, but there is also the light of hope and of grace and we have seen this light shining brightly during this fortnight and the power of the Lord's healing love.

Stephen Rutherford
York Branch Member

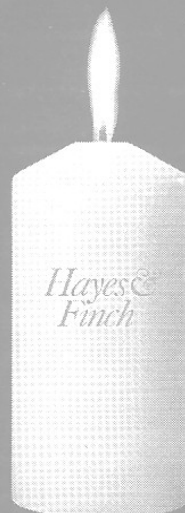
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R.I.P ~ WINIFRED ELLIOTT



1927 – 2013

A member of the Somerset & Avon Branch of the Guild.

Win Elliott came from London, with her husband on his retirement, to live at Plumley Court in Weston-super-Mare. She started attending the nearby Saint Paul's Church soon afterwards when the Vicar was The Reverend Noel McKittrick. Win joined the Church Choir, the Mothers' Union and also took on the position as Verger. She continued these activities until she left to spend a year in Israel, working at a Retreat Centre at Mount Carmel.

Following her departure the position of Verger was taken on by John Howie and then, after a short while, he was replaced by John Money. During the Reverend Hugh Davies' incumbency. When John Money, also a member of the Guild and of this Branch, died, Win returned to Saint Paul's and resumed the position as Verger. She continued to fulfil these duties for several years in her very efficient and reliable manner, for the Reverend Hugh Davies and the Reverend Andrew Alden, until her death on the 15th of December 2013.

We think, according to our Chaplain Colin Maggs, that she was one of the first he admitted into the Guild, and he has been Chaplain to this Branch for 25 years. He also admitted John Money.

Reynold Badger
Branch Chairman



BILL GROVES, BUNIV FCEGV



**THE ADDRESS GIVEN BY THE PRECENTOR OF GUILDFORD CATHEDRAL, CANON NICHOLAS THISTLETHWAITE,
AT THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE FOR BILL GROVES ON 18th OCTOBER 2013**

'And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.' (Colossians: chapter 3, verse 17)

I first met Bill in January 1999 when I was preparing to move to Guildford as Precentor. Bill had what I might call a healthy scepticism about the Clergy. After more than forty years in the business he knew our foibles too well to take a new Precentor too seriously. But his grin was broad, his handshake was firm, and his sense of humour infectious. Anecdotes (sometimes colourfully expressed: Alex Wedderspoon commented that Bill's description of 70 African Bishops' wives dancing in Guildford Cathedral was unrepeatable) revealed a man of great experience, wisdom and humanity. At times, you need a sense of humour to survive in the Church of England, and Bill possessed that in abundance. After I had been here a few months, he introduced me to someone: 'This is Nicholas: awww ... he's all right', and I knew I was on firm ground with the most important person in the Cathedral.

Bill's contribution to the life of Guildford Cathedral was, (quite simply), immeasurable. It is impossible to do it justice in a few minutes, but I will do the best I can. For a start, he knew the building like the back of his hand. Guildford never had any money, so all those small maintenance jobs for which wealthier establishments brought in outside contractors, fell to the Virgers. What Health & Safety would make of it these days, I can't imagine, but it seemed as though they were always up ladders, sorting out the electrics, or coaxing the boiler into action. Then, there was the cleaning. Bill and Tony spent hours mopping and polishing the floors, cleaning the windows, and ensuring things were kept 'decently and in order' in the House of God. Bill always took a professionals' pride in this place and in its appearance, especially at the great festivals.

He clearly enjoyed the ceremonial work and executed it with efficiency and solid dignity; whether he was conducting the Dean to the lectern to read a Lesson to the Choir and a congregation of three during a weekday Evensong in February, or leading Her Majesty The Queen down the centre aisle of a packed Cathedral, he was the consummate professional. He was particularly proud of his relationship with the University of Surrey and the part he played in the regular graduation ceremonies here, and was deeply touched when, in 1991, he was rewarded with the Degree of Bachelor of the University, *honoris causa*. And around these great occasions, conducting Lord Mountbatten, Her Majesty The Queen Mother, Donald Sinden, Lesley Garrett, Archbishops of Canterbury, Mother Teresa, and various distinguished Bishops from the worldwide Anglican Communion, the daily offices went quietly on, with Bill and his team conscientiously caring for linen, laying out the vestments, preparing the altar, and supporting the Clergy as they fulfilled the primary purpose of a cathedral foundation: the *opus dei*.

There were the stories: Bill on the cat-walk modelling his new Virger's Gown at the Christian Resources Exhibition; Bill's uncharacteristic speechlessness at the sight of a tall, portly bishop, somewhat past his prime, making his way to the pulpit in jeans, trainers and a tee-shirt at a charismatic rally in the Cathedral; Bill arriving to open the Cathedral one morning and discovering a young man with no clothes on lying on top of the High Altar; but these are probably best kept for the reception afterwards. I will end with two comments from Dean Wedderspoon's sermon given at Bill's Farewell Service in 2000.

Firstly: 'Bill's humour and the charity, kindness and commonsense that goes with it has helped us through many difficult times ...' Those who were involved with the Cathedral in the 1980s and 1990s will recognise the truth of that. And secondly: 'What Bill has contributed here is the practical expression of his own Christian faith' – a response, in fact, to Paul's injunction in our text – 'And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'

Thanks be to God for his faithful servant, Bill. May he rest in peace, and rise in glory.



PRAYER REQUESTS



If you know of someone for whom prayers would be of benefit or someone who has been prayed for and has recovered or shown improvement, please inform the National Chaplain or the National Welfare Officer

Blackburn, Chester & Manchester: **Margaret Scott**
 Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: **Graham Brindley**
 Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: **Michael Bayliss, Joy Birkin & Jim Wooldridge**
 Oxford: **Anita (Annie) Bayliss, Ernestine Denham, David Dutson & Margaret Morris**
 Rochester & East Chichester: **Tina Lawrence**
 Saint Albans: **Peter Hudson**
 Salisbury: **Jean Jackson & Babs Taylor**
 Somerset & Avon: **Lionel & Mary Holway & Roger Lawrence**
 York: **George & Doreen Cook**

And everyone not specifically mentioned who need love, counsel and the grace of Our Lord

R.I.P Chichester, Guildford & Portsmouth: **Ron Moorey**
 R.I.P Somerset & Avon: **Winifred Elliott**



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THE DIPLOMA COURSE



The Central Council of the Guild, at the recommendation of General Synod, formulated a course to cover the work and ministry of the Verger.

The course is formulated in four units set in two stages:

The first stage is the **Foundation** Unit, which comprises of sixteen assignments, covering preparation for worship, care of the building, record-keeping, and archives, care of the churchyard, and caring for the people of God.

The second stage comprises of the other three units:

The Verger as **Pastor** covers the individual's personal development, their relationship with the people and God, care for others, and for Church resources.

The Verger as **Historian** covers the history of church building, architecture, and the history of worship, including the Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible.

The Verger as **Administrator** covers communication, forms and registers, and the structures of the Church.

Students who complete the course successfully receive a diploma, an academic hood, and the right to use the post-nominal letters 'Dip.GV'.

If you are interested in learning more about the Course, please contact the **Training Registrar: Susan Ansell** or the **Training Officer: John Shearer**.

I would rather be a door keeper in the house of our Lord,
than to dwell in the tents of the
Ungodly'

Psalm 84

The Guild seeks to make effective the ministry of Vergers through the following key **objectives**, by :

Promoting the spiritual nature of the **Vergers' Vocation** through Christian Fellowship and spiritual guidance for all its Members;

Encouraging the advancement of knowledge by education, through maintaining standards of good practice, and by equipping Members for Ministry as vergers in all its aspects, through the provision of advice, training, resources, and by

organizing and promoting training courses and conferences; Providing the means and opportunity for **communication** and discussion of ideas and proposals of common interest to Members;

Providing **support** and encouragement to the Membership in all aspects of their duties whatever they may be and wherever performed;

Advising, upon request, and making recommendations as to terms of employment and welfare of any Member;

Recording the gamut of work undertaken by Vergers; in addition noting each Member's training, experience and qualifications.

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